

REMARKS

Claims 1 to 17 are pending in the application, of which claim 1 is the sole independent claim. Favorable reconsideration and further examination are respectfully requested.

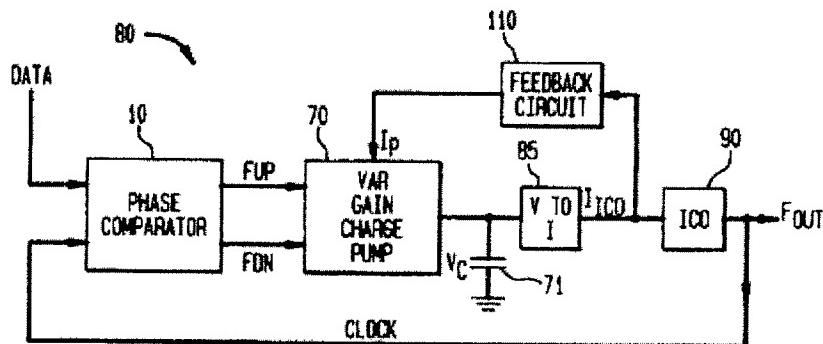
In the Office Action, claims 1 to 5 were rejected over U.S. Patent No. 5,687,201 (McClellan); claims 6, 10 and 14 were rejected over McClellan in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,323,125 (Hiben); claims 8, 12 and 16 were rejected over McClellan in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,071,832 (Cloke); claims 9, 13 and 17 were rejected over McClellan in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,581,593 (Okanobu); and claims 7, 11 and 15 were rejected over McClellan in view of U.S. Patent Publication No. 2002/0041216 (Welland).

We respectfully traverse the rejections. In this regard, claim 1 recites control circuitry for use with an oscillator. The control circuitry comprises a control input configured to provide a modulation signal, an oscillator comprising an oscillator input configured to receive a feed current and an oscillator output configured to provide a frequency-modulated signal, and an amplitude control circuit comprising an amplitude control input that is connected to the oscillator output and an amplitude control output that is connected to the oscillator input to provide the feed current to the oscillator. The amplitude control circuit comprises internal circuitry configured to affect the feed current in response to the modulation signal.

The Office Action alleges that Fig. 3, which is reproduced below, shows the features of claim 1.¹ In particular, the Office states that the control input corresponds to element 10, the oscillator corresponds to element 90, and the amplitude control circuit corresponds to elements 110, 70, and 85. We respectfully disagree.

¹ Office Action, page 2

FIG. 3



Specifically, claim 1 recites that the amplitude control circuit comprises an amplitude control input that is connected to the oscillator output. As noted, the elements of McClellan that the Office Action alleges constitute the amplitude control circuit are elements 110, 70, and 85. However, none of these elements is connected to the output (CLOCK) of ICO 90 (which is alleged to correspond to the claim's oscillator).

Furthermore, we note that the CLOCK path connects the output of ICO 90 to an input of phase comparator 10. However, the CLOCK path simply provides frequency/phase information relating to the ICO output signal to phase comparator 10. There, that information is compared to the frequency/phase of the DATA signal. The alleged counterpart to the amplitude control circuit does not receive the CLOCK signal or the DATA signal and, therefore, does not use the modulation signal to affect the feed current.

For at least the foregoing reasons, claim 1 is believed to be patentable over the art. The remaining art is not understood to remedy the deficiencies of McClellan vis-à-vis claim 1. Accordingly, claim 1 is believed to be patentable.

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Client's Ref. No.: P2003,0026 US N

Each of the dependent claims is also believed to define patentable features of the invention. Each dependent claim partakes of the novelty of its corresponding independent claim and, as such, has not been discussed specifically herein.

It is believed that all of the pending claims have been addressed. However, the absence of a reply to a specific rejection, issue or comment does not signify agreement with or concession of that rejection, issue or comment. In addition, because the arguments made above may not be exhaustive, there may be reasons for patentability of any or all pending claims (or other claims) that have not been expressed. Finally, nothing in this paper should be construed as an intent to concede any issue with regard to any claim, except as specifically stated in this paper, and the amendment of any claim does not necessarily signify concession of unpatentability of the claim prior to its amendment.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, the entire application is believed to be in condition for allowance, and such action is respectfully requested at the Examiner's earliest convenience.

No additional fees are believed to be due for this amendment, however, if any fees are due, please charge them to deposit account 06-1050, referencing Attorney Docket No. 14603-015US1.

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Client's Ref. No.: P2003,0026 US N

Respectfully submitted,

Date: October 17, 2007



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OSCILLATOR ARRANGEMENT FOR FREQUENCY MODULATION

TECHNICAL FIELD

The present invention pertains This patent application relates to an oscillator arrangement
5 that is designed for carrying out frequency modulation processes.

BACKGROUND

Among digital modulation methods, frequency shift keying or FSK, amplitude shift
keying and phase shift keying, as well as combinations of these methods, are broadly utilized for
10 the digital modulation of a carrier signal.

One option for subjecting a carrier signal to frequency shift keying consists of directly
modulating the carrier signal when it is generated in the oscillator.

15 In this case, the frequency shift keying of the oscillator is usually achieved by connecting
or disconnecting small, frequency-determining capacitors to a resonant circuit formed in the
oscillator. The digital modulation signal is modulated on the carrier with the desired frequency
deviation in this fashion.

20 The oscillator may be realized, for example, in the form of a crystal oscillator or an LC-
oscillator. In a crystal oscillator, the oscillation frequency is primarily determined by the
oscillation frequency of the crystal. In an LC-oscillator, however, at least one inductor and at
least one capacitor influence the oscillation frequency.

For example, in order to achieve a frequency deviation of 60 KHz, it is necessary to connect and disconnect comparatively large capacitors in the so-called oscillator tank. However, the connecting and disconnecting of capacitors is always associated with charge injection problems. Undesirable interferences not only occur in the power supply of the oscillator, but also in the substrate terminal of an integrated oscillator. These charges negatively affect the oscillator, for example, a voltage-controlled oscillator, and also influence its output spectrum in an interfering fashion. In addition, the integration of a reconnectable capacitor requires a relatively large chip surface.

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SUMMARY

The present invention is based on the objective of disclosing Disclosed herein is an oscillator arrangement that is suitable for use in modulation processes that are carried out in accordance with frequency shift keying and in which problems due to charge injections are prevented or at least significantly reduced.

According to the invention, this objective is attained with Described herein is an oscillator arrangement for frequency modulation that comprises

- a control input for supplying a modulation signal,
- an oscillator output for tapping a frequency-modulated signal,
- an oscillator with an input for supplying a feed current and with an oscillator output,

- a control circuit for amplitude control with an input that is connected to the oscillator output and with an output that is connected to the input for supplying a feed current for the oscillator, and
 - a means for influencing the feed current in dependence on the modulation signal,
- 5 wherein said means is arranged in the control circuit and coupled to the input of the oscillator for supplying a feed current.

According to the proposed principle, the automatic amplitude control that is normally provided in a controlled frequency modulation oscillator anyhow is also utilized for controlling 10 the operating current of the oscillator and thereby influencing or modulating the oscillator frequency in the desired fashion. This means that the oscillator is modulated due to the fact that the loop amplification of the amplification control loop is controlled by influencing the feed current of the oscillator.

15 The amplitude control circuit ~~preferably is also~~ may be used for varying the so-called tail current of the oscillator in accordance with the current deduction technique, namely under the control of the modulation signal, such that the frequency is also varied in small increments.

20 The proposed principle can be advantageously utilized in connection with LC-oscillators as well as crystal oscillators.

According to the proposed principle, it is possible to completely eliminate reconnectable capacitors for the frequency shift keying process. Consequently, the charge injection problem is

also eliminated and the power supply is not subjected to any undesirable retroactions. In addition, the circuit can be realized on a particularly small chip surface. The triggering of the means for influencing the feed current in dependence on the modulation signal can be realized with a simply designed control block.

5

The means for influencing the feed current ~~preferably comprises~~ may comprise several current switches that are connected in parallel with respect to their switched sections. Depending on the modulation signal, the parallel-connected current switches ~~are preferably~~ may be controlled in such a way that just the current required for detuning the frequency in the desired fashion is deducted.

10

The parallel-connected current switches ~~are preferably~~ may be arranged in a current mirror with their output side. In this case, one respective transistor of the current mirror and one switch assigned thereto ~~preferably~~ may form a series circuit. The series circuits are connected to one another in parallel in this case. The switches can be connected and disconnected independently of one another. The frequency of the oscillator can be easily modulated by ~~means~~ of a current control, in which the loop amplification of the automatic control loop is controlled by triggering the current switches accordingly.

15

The current mirror with the parallel-connected current switches ~~preferably acts~~ may act upon another current mirror that couples a feed current source for supplying the oscillator with the oscillator. The circuit node at which the current mirror with the current switches manipulates the feed current for the oscillator ~~is preferably~~ may be arranged on the common gate terminal or

base terminal of the current mirror transistors in the additional current mirror in this case. This causes part of the current made available by the constant power source to be deducted by the current switches in dependence on the modulation signal such that the oscillator frequency is modulated.

5

A control block ~~is preferably~~ may be provided for triggering the current switches, wherein said control block has an input for supplying the modulation signal and one or more outputs that are connected to the respective control terminals of the assigned current switches.

10 The modulation signal ~~preferably consists of~~ may include a signal that is digitally coded in accordance with frequency shift keying or FSK.

15 The oscillator ~~is preferably~~ may be realized in a tunable fashion and contains an additional control input for supplying a tuning signal and a capacitor that determines the oscillation frequency and is controlled in dependence on the tuning signal. A tunable capacitor of this type ~~is preferably~~ may be realized in the form of a varactor diode. A voltage-controlled oscillator or VCO is realized in this fashion.

20 Other details and advantageous are described below ~~embodiments of the proposed principle from the objects of the dependent claims.~~

The invention is described in greater detail below with reference to several embodiments that are illustrated in the figures.

DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The figures show:

Figure 1, a block diagram of an exemplary oscillator arrangement for carrying out
5 frequency modulation processes in accordance with the proposed principle;

Figure 2, an additional development of the oscillator arrangement according to Figure 1
that is designed for a crystal oscillator;

Figure 3, another embodiment of an oscillator arrangement according to Figure 1 with an
LC-oscillator, and

10 Figure 4, the resonant frequency in dependence on the loop amplification of the
amplitude control in the form of an S-parameter diagram of a crystal oscillator according to
Figure 2.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

15 Figure 1 shows an oscillator arrangement that is designed for carrying out frequency
modulation processes. This oscillator arrangement comprises an oscillator 1, as well as a control
input 2 for supplying a modulation signal. The oscillator 1 has an output 3, at which a frequency-
modulated signal can be tapped. The oscillator 1 also has an input 4 for supplying a feed current.
The feed current is used, among other things, for the attenuation equalization of the resonant
20 circuit formed in the oscillator 1. The feed current is also referred to as a base current or tail
current. The oscillator is arranged in an amplitude control circuit in order to ensure its stability.
The control circuit for the amplitude control comprises an AGC block 5, a first current mirror 6
and a second current mirror 7, 8. The output of the first current mirror 6 controls a power source

transistor 7 that is connected to the feed current input 4 of the oscillator 1 and its power source output. A diode transistor 8 forms the second current mirror together with the power source transistor 7. The common gate terminal of the transistors 7, 8 that is connected to the output of the first current mirror 6 is referred to as the circuit node K. The input of the second current 5 mirror 7, 8 is connected to a power source 9 for supplying the oscillator 1 with a reference current. The current mirror 6 comprises a diode transistor M1 and a total of four parallel-connected current mirror transistors M2, M3, M4, M5 on its output side that can be connected and disconnected independently of one another. This is achieved with one respective switch 10, 10 11, 12, 13 for connecting a reference potential terminal 14 with a load terminal of the controlled section of the assigned transistor M2, M3, M4, M5, in this case, with their source terminal. The gate terminals of the field effect transistors M1 through M5 are directly connected to one another in the current mirror 6. The transistor M1 functions as a diode due to the fact that its gate terminal is directly connected to its drain terminal. The source terminal of the n-channel field effect transistor M1 is connected to the reference potential terminal 14. The drain terminals of 15 the transistors M2 through M5 are directly connected to one another in the circuit node K and form the output of the current mirror 6. The circuit node K is directly connected to the gate terminals of the current mirror transistors 7, 8.

The switches 10, 11, 12, 13 are realized in the form of current switches and controlled by 20 a logic control that is arranged in a corresponding control block 15, the input of which forms the control input 2 for supplying a modulation signal for the oscillator arrangement and the output of which is connected to the control terminals of the switches 10, 11, 12, 13.

An optionally provided tuning input of the voltage-controlled oscillator 1 is not illustrated in Figure 1.

The peculiarity of the circuit shown in Figure 1 can be seen in the fact that reconnectable 5 capacitances in the oscillator core are not directly controlled based on the modulation data in order to influence the oscillation frequency of the oscillator, but that the modulation data manipulate the amplitude control of the oscillator 1. In this case, an indirect shift keying of the oscillator frequency is realized by controlling the oscillator feed current. The amplitude control circuit 5, 6, 7 comprises switchable current mirrors that make it possible to adjust the frequency 10 of the oscillator. The modulation signal consequently controls the loop amplification of the amplitude control circuit 5, 6, 7. The frequency shift keying of the oscillator 1 is realized with the current switches in this case, namely in accordance with a current deduction technique. This means that reconnectable capacitors are no longer required for the frequency shift keying in the 15 oscillator. This leads to significant advantages with respect to charge injections, retroactions on the power supply, a simple triggering process and the required chip surface.

Figure 2 shows another embodiment of ~~the innovate~~ an oscillator arrangement with an oscillator that is realized in the form of a crystal oscillator 1'. The amplitude control including the switchable power sources and the amplitude control circuit, as well as the triggering thereof 20 with the modulation signal, correspond to Figure 1. This is the reason why these aspects are not discussed anew. The oscillator 1' shown in Figure 2 is realized in the form of a crystal oscillator and comprises an oscillator crystal 16. Both terminals of the oscillator crystal 16 are connected to the reference potential via one respective capacitor 17, 18. An amplifier comprising a p-channel

field effect transistor 19 is provided in order to realize the attenuation equalization of the resonant system. The gate terminal of the transistor 19, on which the output 3 of the oscillator is simultaneously formed, is connected to one of the two terminals of the crystal 16. The source terminal of the transistor 19 is connected to the reference potential. The drain terminal of the 5 transistor 19 that forms the input for supplying a feed current 4 for the oscillator 1' is connected to the gate terminal of the transistor 19 via a resistor 20, as well as to the other terminal of the crystal 16. In the circuit shown in Figure 2, it is possible to realize a frequency deviation between 10 kHz and 100 kHz by triggering the current switches 10, 11, 12, 13 accordingly in dependence on the modulation signal. The data rate can lie between 0 and 20 kbit/sec. In order to prevent 10 self-mixing, the time constant of the amplitude control of the amplitude control circuit 5, 6, 7 should be adjusted significantly shorter than the time constant of the oscillator. In the crystal oscillator shown, the frequency is varied as a function of the current and consequently as a function of the amplitude being adjusted. Due to the utilization of an amplitude control, the oscillator tail current and therefore the frequency can be varied by means of a digitally controlled 15 current deduction technique. Only slight charge shifts occur at frequency deviations up to plus/minus 100 kHz. An application-dependent weighting of the transistors M1 through M5 makes it possible to adjust practically any desired frequency deviation within the above-described range.

20 According to the proposed principle, charge injections are eliminated, undesirable retroactions of interference signals on the power supply are prevented, the circuits can be integrated on a comparatively small chip surface, and the current switches can be triggered by means of a logic control 15 of particularly simple design.

Figure 3 shows an embodiment of the proposed principle with an LC-oscillator 1''. Aside from the shape of the oscillator 1'', the design of the oscillator arrangement according to Figure 3 largely corresponds to that shown in Figure 1 with respect to the components used, their 5 respective connections and the advantageous function of the oscillator arrangement.

Consequently, these aspects are not discussed anew at this point. The oscillator 1'' is realized in the form of a tunable LC-resonant circuit and, as such, comprises two fixed inductances 21, 22, two tunable capacitances 23, 24 and an attenuation equalization amplifier 25 that comprises two cross-coupled p-channel transistors 26, 27. The inductances 21, 22 connect the feed current input 10 4 of the oscillator 1'' to the pair of output terminals 3, 3' of the oscillator 1''. The tuning input 28 of the oscillator for supplying a tuning signal is connected to the output terminals 3, 3' via one respective varactor 23, 24. The source terminals of the transistors 26, 27 are grounded. One respective gate terminal of the transistors 26, 27 is connected to one respective drain terminal of the other transistor such that a cross coupling is produced. The two drain terminals of the 15 attenuation equalization amplifier 25 form the output 3, 3' of the LC-oscillator. The attenuation equalization amplifier 25 delivers a negative resistance or a negative impedance.

In order to prevent self-mixing, the time constant of the amplitude control 5, 6, 7 needs to be much faster than the time constant of the oscillator. The proposed circuit makes it possible to 20 achieve a frequency deviation between 10 kHz and a few MHz. The attainable data rate may be as high as a few Mbit per second.

The circuit according to Figure 3 provides the same advantages as the circuit according to Figure 2, namely the elimination of undesirable charge injections, the prevention of undesirable interferences in the power supply of the circuit, the ability to implement the circuit on a small chip surface and a simply designed logic control 15.

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Figure 4 shows a diagram of the resonant frequency of the crystal oscillator according to Figure 2 as a function of the amplification of the amplitude control loop, namely in the form of an S-parameter diagram. In this case, the loop amplification serves as the system parameter. One can ascertain that a range of approximately 1800 Hz can be covered by varying the amplification 10 of the amplitude control circuit. This diagram verifies the functionality of the proposed principle, namely the frequency shift keying by means of the switchable amplitude control of an oscillator.

If the described tunable oscillator is integrated into a phase-locked loop (PLL), the time constant of the controller is preferably may be chosen such that it does not react to short-term 15 frequency changes caused by the frequency modulation.